

PISHKUN, WILLOW CREEK, BENTON LAKE

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

January 1 - April 30, 1955

REFUGE PERSONNEL

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Charlo, Montana

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Narrative Report
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I. GENERAL

A. Weather Conditions.

Following is a table of weather data as reported by the County Agent's office in Choteau Montana. This is the only station which keeps an accurate weather data record in the vicinity of these refuges. It is naturally not as accurate as a station which would be kept at the refuges but it does give a very good indication of conditions prevailing in this general area.

<u>Month:</u>	<u>Snow</u>	<u>Precipitation:</u>	<u>Max. Temp.:</u>	<u>Min. Temp.:</u>
January	4"	.08	56	-4
February	7.5"	.32	56	-15
March	12"	.35	57	-21
April	8.5"	.93	68	11
Total	32"	1.68	Extremes: 68	-21

The precipitation for this period was slightly below the normal, but it was distributed over a period of time when it actually accomplished just about as much good as the higher amounts which usually fall at times when it can't be utilized.

B. Water Conditions.

The following tables show the comparison of water levels in the two reservoirs during this period over the past several years.

PISHKUN

<u>End of:</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1950</u>
January	4362.5	4363.2	4361.1	4365.4	4361.9	4362.0
February	4362.5	4363.1	4360.9	4365.2	4361.8	4361.8
March	4362.0	4362.0	4360.7	4365.0	4361.8	4361.7
April	4362.5	4363.0	4362.6	4365.3	4361.9	4366.1
Crest of Spillway	4374.0			Bottom of Outlet	4342.0	

WILLOW CREEK

<u>End of:</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1950</u>
January	4136.2	4137.1	4132.7	4135.4	4135.4	4106.9
February	4136.5	4137.8	4132.9	4136.0	4135.9	4108.7
March	4137.0	4138.2	4134.0	4137.1	4137.5	4110.9
April	4137.5	4138.6	4139.1	4138.1	4138.3	4115.9

Crest of Spillway 4142.0

Bottom of Outlet 4085.0

Very little if any Spring runoff has started in this area as yet and it is not expected that the reservoir levels will be raised until somewhat later this year than has been the custom in the past.

BENTON LAKE


There is no water level guages set up at Benton Lake because there is such an unstable supply of water for this area. During the past two years it has been the good fortune of the Service to have this area hold a substantial amount of water throughout the entire year. This has created a considerable duck pond with excellent habitat for resting, nesting and feeding waterfowl. The residents of this area have stated that they have seen more ducks and geese during the past two years than they have seen for many years previously. Of course they cannot give any accurate figures as to populations but they do give a fairly accurate trend in numbers for the area. If any runoff at all is experienced in this area this year the old lake bed should once more be filled to capacity and with good luck a successful nesting season will yeild a good number of birds.

During the one trip over to these three areas the weather was so inclement as to forstall any accurate bird counts, however the local residents say there are a "lot" of birds using Benton Lake. From all reports received from both Fishkun and Willow Creek the same story appears to unfold as in the past.

No Birds.

In accordance with the instructions issued by the General Accounting Office a grazing rate survey was made at Benton Lake Refuge. The refuge manager made this survey during the middle of April, and covered most of the territory surrounding the refuge. Rates were obtained from the Forest Service, County Agent's Offices, private individuals, Bureau of Reclamation and Agricultural Assistants at two Banks in Great Falls. From all indications some adjustment will probably be made in the grazing rates on Benton Lake Refuge. No final word has been received to date as to just what adjustment, if any, will be made.

Respectfully submitted


Grover P. Elgan,
Refuge Manager

Completed May 15, 1955

Approved: _____ Date _____
John E. Schwartz,
Superintendent

Approved: _____ Date _____
Regional Director
Fish and Wildlife Service
Region One, Portland, Oregon.